

picket line. The other, in the *Evening Dispatch*, took place at the corner of Tenth and Princess when a black man refused to stop for a patrol at about eight o'clock at night.<sup>111</sup>

As the fighting continued, word of the riot spread throughout the state and country with telegrams flashing back and forth between Wilmington, Raleigh, Charlotte, and President McKinley in Washington, D. C. Telegrams were sent to the *Raleigh News and Observer* first at 11:00 A. M., and later regular updates were posted at its offices; and people came by to read and discuss the situation.<sup>112</sup> The governor responded by dispatching several other State Guard units to Wilmington. These units began to arrive by train late in the evening and into the following day. First to arrive were the Maxton Guards at 11:00 P. M., and Taylor assigned them to guard the city hospital. The Clinton Guards arrived at 11:30 P. M. and guarded the city jail. The Kinston Naval Reserves arrived at 2:30 A. M. on the eleventh and were assigned patrol duty before they relieved the Clinton Guards at the jail.<sup>113</sup> President McKinley met with staff to discuss the riot but did not move to activate troops because no official request for assistance was sent to him by Governor Russell.<sup>114</sup>

Another part of the violence, with particular ramifications for women and children, was the mass exodus of African Americans that began almost as soon as Waddell's group descended upon the press building. Women fled their homes with children in tow to the outskirts of the town. The women were soon followed by those men who could escape the shooting and

patrols through town. Most often, the stopping points or respites for these refugees were the cemeteries and swamps. Reports abound in the records about the disappearance of blacks from the city and the grim conditions of the wilderness in which they hid.<sup>115</sup> The weather conditions on these November days and nights were typical of autumn in North Carolina—mild, but in the space of a few hours, chilly with cold mists.<sup>116</sup> Newspapers reported that the roads were lined with refugees carrying bedding or personal belongings and that it was “pitiable to see the children hurrying in fright after their parents.” The refugees then spent the nights of the tenth and eleventh in

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<sup>115</sup> James Cowan wrote that “many negroes were frightened to the point of distraction with the turn of events [and] went to the woods near the city. They thought their lives were in jeopardy.” John Metts wrote that “the negroes are frightened out of their wits. Most of them have left town.” Edward Wootten’s mother wrote on November 21, 1898 that a friend’s black laborer, Stephen, was fired for registering to vote, and then, after he was told of the dangers to his life, he “left for parts unknown and is still there, nobody has seen him since.” James Cowan, “The Wilmington Race Riot”; John Metts, November 12, 1898, Hinsdale Family Papers, Duke University Library, Durham; E.W. Wootten, November 21, 1898, Wootten Collection, University of North Carolina at Wilmington Library.

<sup>116</sup> Benjamin Keith wrote to Senator Marion Butler on November 17 that “the poor negroes have been in the woods like so many cattle during all this bad weather.” Peter Mallett, a white Fayetteville merchant with close ties to Wilmington recorded in for November 10, 1898 that there was “rain and some hail” along with his entry that “war commenced at Wilmington today ... negroes suffer” and that it was “cloudy and cold” on the eleventh. The *Messenger* reported that it was “sufficiently cool ... to cause suffering” and that the “approaching darkness and a threatening storm added to the dread and horror of the situation.” Benjamin Keith, November 17, 1898, Marion Butler Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill; Peter Mallett Journal, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill; *Wilmington Messenger*, November 13, 1898, November 14, 1898.

<sup>111</sup> Hayden, *WLI*, 92; *Evening Dispatch* (Wilmington), November 11, 1898.

<sup>112</sup> Prather, 120.

<sup>113</sup> Hayden, *WLI*, 98-99; *NC Public Documents*, Adjutant General’s Report, 1899.

<sup>114</sup> *News and Observer* (Raleigh), November 11, 1898.